



Waukesha County Jail Education Program

The majority of incarcerated inmates lack basic education and employment skills. Since eventually all inmates will be released, jail-based programs can help ex-offenders more successfully reintegrate into society by increasing their cognitive skills. Literacy and education programs are crucial if incarcerated men and women are to be helped toward a productive life, instead of a return trip to prison.

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program in the Waukesha County Jail, provided through a collaboration of CJCC and Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC), provides basic and secondary education to incarcerated individuals who are motivated to further their learning in a calm, positive setting.

The program is open to any inmate requesting to attend unless there are disciplinary or safety and security issues. Each participant sets individualized education and employment goals at registration and regularly evaluates progress with the help of an instructor. The most common goals include upgrading academic skills, obtaining high school equivalency, preparing for college and obtaining employment. Length of participation in the ABE Program is based on length of stay. Inmates can attend the program as long as they exhibit appropriate behavior and are making progress toward identified goals.

Through the ABE Program, students can complete high school credentials, increase basic academic skills and employability, obtain computer skills and prepare for vocational, technical and college programs. The program also offers other self-improvement support services such as English as a Second Language, parenting classes and consumer education to improve academic skills and employability.

WCTC teaching staff meets with incarcerated individuals in a small classroom setting in the jail, twice a day, four days per week. Participant successes are celebrated at annual graduation ceremonies complete with caps, gowns, keynote and participant addresses and certificates. WCTC instructors remain an approachable resource for inmates/students post-release.

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